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For Immediate Release

INDIAN COUNTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ICED)

FUNDS AWARDED BY COMMERCE

Helena, MT – February 17, 2006 – Indian Country Economic Development funds from the Montana Department of Commerce have been available to tribal governments since October 1, 2005. The 59th Montana Legislature made funds available to support tribal business development projects, workforce training projects, entrepreneurial training, feasibility studies and other types of economic development projects. \$400,000 is available annually from the program. Governor Brian Schweitzer said, “When tribes prosper, Montana prospers.”

Commerce has awarded six (6) grants to date. Commerce Director, Anthony Preite said, “ICED grants are leveraged with tribal funds. The grants are usually a small part of a larger tribal project that may have a significant impact on a tribe’s economic growth and development.”

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes were recently awarded \$50,000 to support an equipment purchase at the tribally owned Flathead Stickers and Lath Plant. The new equipment will open a new source of raw product for Flathead Stickers. The equipment has both economic implications and workforce implications. The equipment will allow Flathead Stickers to make better use of forest slash piles and designated thinning blocks, will reduce fire potential, salvage otherwise unsalvageable raw product and offer tribal welfare recipients more diversified training opportunities.

The Little Shell Chippewa Tribe was recently awarded \$50,000. The tribe does not have a reservation but is headquartered in Great Falls. This project will provide support for a feasibility study, grant writing for potential support and the creation of a business plan for a tribal capital and visitor center. This project is part of the tribe’s overall mission to represent, develop, protect and advance the well being of its tribal members.

Interested Montana tribes should contact Fran Viereck, Program Manager at 406-841-2736 or fviereck@mt.gov for application guidance.